

GOOD INTENTIONS

Norms and Practices of Imperial Humanitarianism

The New Imperialism, Volume 4

Edited by
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Front cover image: According to the official caption, this is US Navy Hospital Corpsman 2nd Class Porfirio Nino, from Maritime Civil Affairs Team 104, practices speaking Kinyarwanda, one of the official languages of Rwanda, during a civil observation mission in Bunyamanza, Rwanda, August 7, 2009. (DoD photo by Senior Chief Mass Communication Specialist Jon E. McMillan, US Navy. Public domain.) This particular photograph was also used as the lead image for 2011 presentation by AFRICOM titled, "United States Africa Command: The First Three Years". On the image the following words were superimposed: "Umuntu Ngumuntu Ngamantu' I am a person through other people. My humanity is tied to yours.~ Zulu proverb"

Back cover image: According to the official caption, these are US Airmen assigned to the 23rd Equipment Maintenance Squadron, 75th Aircraft Maintenance Unit "downloading" an A-10C Thunderbolt II aircraft during an operational readiness exercise at Moody Air Force Base, Georgia, August 4, 2009. (DoD photo by Airman 1st Class Joshua Green, US Air Force. Public domain.)

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CHAPTER 2

US Imperialism and Disaster Capitalism in Haiti



Keir Forgie

“Have they not consigned these miserable blacks to man-eating dogs until the latter, sated by human flesh, left the mangled victims to be finished off with bayonet and poniard”. — Henri Christophe, 1767–1820.

At 4:53 PM, on Monday, January 12, 2010, a 7.0 magnitude earthquake shocked Port-au-Prince, Haiti. It was the most devastating earthquake the country had experienced in over 200 years, with estimated infrastructure damage between \$8 and \$14 billion (Donlon, 2012, p. vii; Farmer, 2011, p. 54). This is particularly astounding considering that Haiti is recognized as the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere, with 70% of individuals surviving on less than \$2 US per day (Farmer, 2011, p. 60). The quake’s epicentre was located 15 miles southwest of Port-au-Prince, which is the most heavily populated area in all of Haiti (Donlon, 2012, p. vii). Approximately three million Haitians, one third of the country’s population, live in Port-au-Prince and every single individual was affected by the disaster: the Haitian government reported 230,000 deaths, 300,600 injured persons, and between 1.2 to 2 million displaced people (Donlon, 2012, p. vii). The country presented a “blank slate,” with all manner of political, economic, and social services in absolute ruin—an ideal circumstance to exercise the arms of the new (US) imperialism: notably, NGOs, the UN Stabili-

zation Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH), the militarization of humanitarian aid, and disaster capitalism.

US hegemonic globalization is the current world order—it is the new imperialism. The breadth of US influence across the globe in terms of politics, economics, and military are unparalleled across history, affording the nation the means to orchestrate geopolitics in its favor through coercion, masked by rhetorical altruism (Moselle, 2008, pp. 1, 8). However, the US is currently challenged by a state of economic decline and shifting international relations. In an effort to maintain its dominant position, the US must implement a number of novel strategies. As such, the “new imperialism” is distinguished by certain contemporary characteristics: notably, war in the pursuit of dwindling natural resources, the militarization of the social sciences, war corporatism, the romanticization of imperialism, and as a central focus to this paper, the framing of military interventions as “humanitarian,” legitimized through rhetoric of freedom, democracy, and the right to intervene. In truth, the militarization of humanitarian aid serves to facilitate the imposition of neoliberal economic policies through the exploitation of weakened states—a strategy known as “disaster capitalism”.

Disaster capitalism is a defining feature of US imperialism. It is used to exploit nation states during times of crises and to implement neoliberal corporate policies that favor US capitalism. Apocalyptic events present the ideal opportunity of a “blank slate” on which free-market economics and US-style “democratic” systems can be established to replace what has been temporarily incapacitated. These exploitative transitions are possible because nations in turmoil, desperate for aid, are not in a position to negotiate the terms of that aid; therefore, controversial policies are passed while the victimized nation and its people are emotionally and physically shocked and collectively dependent (Klein, 2007, p. 17). The result is an extortion of state sovereignty swaddled by mutual consent: privatization, government deregulation, and reduced social welfare are beneficial for US capitalism and detrimental for the long-

term security and development of shocked nations (Klein, 2007, p. 9).

The US imposes its imperial will upon Haiti via military intervention, US-funded NGOs, and the US-sponsored UN-mission, MINUSTAH. The US has repeatedly used its military and the CIA to intervene in Haitian politics and guarantee neoliberal commercial interests. MINUSTAH has contributed to the country's state of ontological insecurity, preventing democratic organization and fair representation. In addition, US-sponsored NGOs have undermined the authority of the Haitian government locally and on a global political scale, which facilitates the implementation of US interests in Haiti. Combined with Haiti's history of colonial oppression, these injustices help explain the economic and structural vulnerability of the nation leading up to the earthquake of 2010. Haiti may be the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere, in dire need of assistance (and fair political relations) from more developed nations. However, not all assistance is created equal—given that altruistic rhetoric and appeals to humanitarianism are used to mask US intentions of conquest, the focal point of any analysis of US imperialism in Haiti must be the political and economic conditions that result from US impositions, not the propaganda used to foster a favorable international appeal for foreign aid. Claims of good intentions do not negate imperial outcomes that prevent independent development and exacerbate indebtedness.

US imperialism and disaster capitalism in Haiti are enforced by military intervention, US-funded NGOs, and the MINUSTAH occupation of Haiti, all of which have undermined Haitian governmental autonomy, societal structure, and economic development. Furthermore, the militarization of humanitarian aid within Haiti following the cataclysmic earthquake of January 2010 facilitated US-style disaster capitalism. Taken together, militarization of aid and disaster capitalism are the exemplars of the new imperialism. The US capitalized upon the crisis to pursue its own politico-economic interests under the guise of al-

truistic rhetoric. These actions are imperialist because of the coercive methods used to usurp the power of national decision-making in relation to infrastructure development and economic policy, which ultimately subverts Haiti and reduces it to the status of a US means of production and a sponge for capital overflow.

US Military Intervention

The US military has a long history of intervening in Haiti to impose imperial interests: noteworthy US interventions include the military occupation of 1915-1934, support for the Duvalier dictatorships of 1934-1986, the CIA sponsored coup of 1991, and the CIA orchestrated exile of President Aristide in 2004. In 1915, US Marines invaded Haiti and occupied the country for a period of 19 years in order to secure US interests. The US privatized the National Bank, re-instituted forced-labour, and left behind a military force that would become the precursor for the Haitian Army (Podur, 2012, pp. 13-14). From 1957 to 1986, the US supported the dictatorial regimes of the Duvaliers because of their anti-communist agendas and their favouring US corporate investors (Smith, 2010/1/14). The Duvalier reign was overcome by revolt in 1986, and in 1991 Jean-Bertrand Aristide of the Lavalas political party was elected president with a campaign of progressive reforms to serve Haiti's poor (Podur, 2012, pp. 16-17). Following a CIA military backed coup in 1991, Aristide was removed from power only to be restored to the presidency by the Clinton administration under the condition that Aristide impose the US neoliberal plan (referred to by Haitians as "The Plan of Death") (Chossudovsky, 2004/2/29; Smith, 2010/1/14). In February 2004, the Pentagon and Haiti's elite organized yet another coup that exiled Aristide to South Africa. To quell the pro-Aristide uprising, the US instigated a UN military occupation of Haiti and appointed a puppet government led by René Préval to enforce the US neoliberal plan (Chossudovsky, 2004/2/29; Frantz, 2011;

Smith, 2010/1/14). According to President Aristide, he was kidnapped and forced to resign under pressure by the US, although these accusations have been denied (CNN, 2004/3/1; Frantz, 2011). Even this brief chronology attests to the fact that the real state power belongs to the US military, which seems to intervene against Haitian sovereignty as it sees fit. Currently, UN military forces originally deployed to control “unrest” (dissent) following the coup of 2004 continue to occupy Haiti under the guise of security and stabilization. MINUSTAH has, however, contributed considerably to the state of ontological insecurity in Haiti, functioning as an arm of US imperialism.

MINUSTAH

MINUSTAH functions to enforce US politico-economic interests in Haiti by suppressing democracy and contributing to ontological insecurity that interferes with national sovereignty. MINUSTAH’s continued occupation of Haiti is based on the proposition that the international community is threatened by local political violence (Frantz, 2011). However, with the US paying one-quarter of MINUSTAH’s budget, the support for occupation is much more sinister.

MINUSTAH enforces US government objectives by preventing social and political movements that run counter to neoliberalism and US corporate investment. According to a US Embassy cable from October 2008, then Ambassador Janet Sanderson explicitly states, “The UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti is an indispensable tool in realizing core USG (US government) policy interests in Haiti,” including the prevention of resurgent “populist and anti-market economy political forces” (US Embassy Port-au-Prince [USEP], 2008/10/1). MINUSTAH has suppressed electoral democracy and free speech in Haiti through fraudulent elections and the killing of civilians during peaceful protests, thereby eliminating any opportunity for the poor majority to be heard (Frantz, 2011). Ac-

ording to Camille Chalmers, executive director of the Haitian Platform to Advocate for Alternative Development (PAPDA), “in terms of the construction of a democratic climate and tradition, we have regressed in comparison with the periods preceding MINUSTAH’s arrival”. This perception is based on the 2006 and 2010 presidential elections supported by the UN in which the most popular political party, Fanmi Lavalas led by Aristide, as well as many other political opponents, were banned from participating (Coughlin, 2011/10/6). Furthermore, in April 2008, UN troops killed a handful of demonstrators who were protesting against the rising costs of food, exemplifying the violent repression of political free speech.

In addition to such acts of armed violence, MINUSTAH has been accused of several accounts of sexual assault and the spread of disease. Together, these acts contribute to the state of ontological insecurity in Haiti, thereby undermining national sovereignty. For instance, in November 2007, 111 Sri Lankan soldiers were discharged for the sexual exploitation of Haitian minors (Coughlin, 2011/10/6). Furthermore, evidence suggests that UN soldiers introduced a virulent strain of Nepalese cholera just ten months following the earthquake. Approximately 7,000 Haitian have died and 700,000 have fallen ill (Engler, 2012/12/20). Outbreaks began after excrement from a MINUSTAH base in Mirebalais was released into the Artibonite River, used by the inhabitants of local slums for bathing and drinking. There is also reason to believe that UN officials were aware of the cholera strain’s presence prior to the outbreak due to illness among soldiers, yet did nothing to prevent the contamination of local water sources (Coughlin, 2011/10/6; Engler, 2012/12/20).

For these reasons, Haitians are indignant towards MINUSTAH—it represents US interests in Haiti, functioning as a large anti-Aristide gang (Coughlin, 2011/10/6). In this sense, MINUSTAH enforces political repression of the poor majority, serves the dominant status quo of Haiti’s elites, and facilitates imperial interests that prevent Haitian self-determination. These effects are mirrored and com-

pounded by those imposed via the overwhelming presence of US-funded NGOs.

NGOs

NGOs function as arms of US imperialism by undermining the Haitian government: NGOs confuse the locus of sovereign authority for Haitians, possess agendas tied to global political influence, and offer a means for the US to invest aid money towards projects that suit imperial ambitions. It is estimated that prior to the earthquake of 2010, between 3,000 and 10,000 NGOs were present in Haiti, earning the country the title “Republic of NGOs” (United States Institute of Peace [USIP], 2010).

The excessive number of non-state organizing bodies produces a sense of hypergovernance, thereby undermining the authority of the Haitian government. A perception of statelessness among residents ensues and a confusion as to who governs the country results from a dependence on NGOs for essential services. A lack of coordination between NGOs and the state results in a mismatch of social development projects that are unsustainable, further contributing to the impression that no local authority is truly in charge (Kivland, 2012, pp. 248, 261; USIP, 2010).

Furthermore, NGOs provide a channel through which foreign governments and donors can funnel aid money, which draws away from potential state resources. This funding greatly increases NGO infrastructure, which in turn lures educated personnel from the public sector towards the greater financial opportunity, benefits, and improved working conditions offered by NGOs. The result is a “brain-drain” and further incapacitated government (USIP, 2010, pp. 1-2).

NGOs also possess their own agendas and political influence while being heavily influenced by donor interests, therefore decisions are made to support the donors and deliverers more than the recipients (Cunningham, 2012, p. 113). Humanitarian aid is inherently political, which fos-

ters a form of political coercion that elicits policies at the discretion of the donor (Bueno de Mesquita, 2007, p. 254). To illustrate, many NGOs were involved in the political maneuvers—partnered with the governments of the US, Canada, and France—that resulted in the exile of democratically elected president Aristide in 2004 (Engler, 2009/3/8). Considering that Aristide’s constituency is comprised of the poor majority, it is questionable exactly whom NGOs are trying to help.

Although recipients do benefit from the aid conferred, the greatest gains are made by donors, and NGOs offer a means of pursuing business and political opportunities abroad with substantial returns on investment. Despite the \$12 billion US funneled into Haiti through foreign aid and NGOs following the quake, the country remains in dire straights because the nature of the humanitarian aid regime conspires to prioritize donor-interests, particularly those of the US. These interests include militarizing the Caribbean Basin in pursuit of manifest destiny while permanently subverting Haiti to a means of production for US capital.

The Militarization of Humanitarian Aid

The US has used the militarization of humanitarian aid in Haiti to mask a forced occupation and imperial ambitions under the guise of stabilization. The US government initiated a military invasion of Haiti before President Préval indicated any security concern, thereby undermining Haitian sovereignty. The US greatly exaggerated the threat of internal violence and political uprising to justify an excessive military deployment, which criminalized the victims. Furthermore, the US used its military force and political influence to immediately usurp control of the rescue operation, resulting in the subversion of food and medical security in favor of military priorities. In this sense, the US demonstrated two things: the military’s inability to transfer combat skills to humanitarian action and the willing-

ness of the US to capitalize upon any opportunity in the Caribbean in pursuit of self-interests.

As mentioned, the US government initiated a military deployment in Haiti before any request was made by the Préval government, demonstrating US self-entitlement to usurp national decision making. According to a cable from Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, the US deployed 4,000 military personnel to arrive in Haiti by January 15, followed by an additional 6,000 two days later. In a January 16 cable, President Préval established the following key priorities in the aftermath of the quake: communications, coordination, transport, food, water, medicine, and burials—no formal request for military personnel had been made (Herz, 2011/6/15). On January 17, a “joint communique” issued by Préval and Hillary Clinton stated the first request from Haiti for increased security assistance by the US military (Herz, 2011/6/15). Although the sense of unilateral US intervention was diminished, it did not entirely calm criticism from the international community of the US militarization of aid to Haiti. This forced the US to begin a campaign of rhetorical appeasement that reinforced the role of the US military as an assistant, not a leader, to the Haitian rescue mission (Clinton, 2010/1/22). Thus began the third US military occupation of Haiti within the previous twenty years.

The US deployed an excessive amount of military personnel to support the MINUSTAH security effort and justified this action through an exaggeration of the threat of looting and violence; however, the reality is that such incidences were sporadic and the preconceived notions of savagery served only to criminalize the victims who were in need of real humanitarian assistance, not law enforcement. In a January 14 cable to US Embassies and Pentagon commands worldwide, Hillary Clinton warned of significant looting related to food shortages; however, according to Ambassador Merten in Haiti, such incidences occurred only sporadically (Herz, 2011/6/15). The expectation of large-scale violence that could interfere with the delivery of essential supplies was the justification behind the US

decision to deploy military forces before medical aid, water, or food. Considering that incidences of violence were relatively rare, the militarization of humanitarian aid in Haiti appears to have been an effort to assert political control rather than provide genuine assistance. As explained by Camille Chalmers, "the first response [has been] a military response. It is a militarization of humanitarian aid. Today there are 32,000 foreign soldiers in the country, and I don't think we need 32,000 soldiers to distribute humanitarian aid" (Mennonite Central Committee [MCC], 2010/2/8). According to the Pentagon, at the height of its intervention, there were approximately 22,000 US military personnel in Haiti, with 7,000 present on the ground and the remaining forces mobilized in 58 aircraft and 15 nearby vessels. In addition, the Coast Guard was assisting in the interception of any potential refugees (Herz, 2011/6/15). On January 19, Sebastian Walker, a reporter stationed in Haiti, explained, "most Haitians here have seen little humanitarian aid so far. What they have seen is guns, and lots of them....This is what much of the UN presence actually looks like on the streets of Port-au-Prince: men in uniform, racing around in vehicles, carrying weapons" (Democracy Now!, 2010/1/19). With an additional 10,000 MINUSTAH soldiers present on the island, claims of an overwhelming military presence and sense of US domination are understandable.

The US used its military force and political influence to usurp control of the rescue operation and subvert food and medical security in favor of military priorities. The effects of this interference were most evident and criticized in relation to the US military control of the Port-au-Prince airport, which it seized within the first 72 hours after the quake. The US pushed forward an agenda that prioritized military flights over planes that were carrying medical personnel, essential supplies, and relief experts. The primary concern of the military was to establish a secure atmosphere, which interfered with the delivery of aid. The result seems contradictory, as civil unrest, one might assume, could be more likely to develop as supplies run low

and aid is slow to arrive (Way, 2010/2/2). The preferential treatment of US military flights carrying weapons and equipment elicited serious criticism from mid-level French, Italian, and Brazilian officials. The medical aid organization Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) was particularly frustrated by the US' control. Five MSF planes carrying vital supplies and personnel were refused landing for extended periods and were forced to land in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic (Democracy Now!, 2010/1/19; Herz, 2011/6/15; Way, 2010/2/2). Similar difficulties were encountered with flights supplied by the UN World Food Program (WFP), which carried food, water, and medicine as well (Bennis, 2010/1/20). Such instances have led to the accusation that the US in fact interfered with the progress of the rescue mission. As Patrick Elie, a reporter in Port-au-Prince, explains, "the priorities of the flight should be determined by the Haitians. So, otherwise, it's a takeover" (Democracy Now!, 2010/1/19). Clearly, the US was more concerned with its agenda of military control over humanitarian relief—arguably an expected outcome with the militarization of humanitarian aid—which paved the way for disaster capitalism to follow.

Disaster Capitalism

Disaster capitalism describes the predatory actions of governments and corporations that identify market opportunities in times of crisis and take advantage of incapacitated nations to carry out extensive neoliberal reform that would otherwise be highly resisted and difficult to implement. Once the US military had established emergency control of Haiti in 2010, the US government overtook the state and enforced a series of policies that favored neoliberalism and US corporations. In this regard, the US possessed a pre-conceived ideology of structural reform that it sought to impose on Haiti immediately following the earthquake. Following from that, the US took control of the aid money that was destined for Haiti and invested it in corporations

and organizations that supported US interests. US food aid was dumped into the country, further exacerbating the dire state of the peasant farming industry, which had been previously handicapped by the Clinton administration.

Four years after the earthquake that devastated Haiti, over 170,000 people continue to sleep under makeshift tents while foreign aid is funneled into private enterprise and the creation of industrial areas: luxury tourism, mining, and an expanded sweatshop industry have been pushed on the country as the easy economic solutions to a complex problem (Fresnillo, 2014/3/5). The US has taken advantage of this natural disaster, and from its acquisition of emergency power, has pushed to implement the same old neoliberal “Plan of Death”—masked by rhetorical good intentions, disguising imperial ambitions.

Immediately following the earthquake, imperial ideology and predatory capitalism were evident in the commentaries of several right-wing institutions, academics, and politically powerful individuals. For example, the Heritage Foundation (HF) explicitly stated an intention to capitalize upon the natural disaster. Immediately following the quake, the right-wing think tank released the following comment: “In addition to providing immediate humanitarian assistance, the US response to the tragic earthquake in Haiti offers opportunities to reshape Haiti’s long-dysfunctional government and economy as well as to improve the public image of the United States in the region” (Eaton, 2010/1/17). The original paper, titled “Amidst the Suffering, Crisis in Haiti Offers Opportunities to the US,” was removed the following day, as the opportunistic intentions received sharp criticism, particularly from Naomi Klein, who coined the term “disaster capitalism” and published the essay on her own website the day after the earthquake (Fresnillo, 2014/3/5). Simultaneously, Bill Clinton, US special envoy to Haiti, was busy advocating for the implementation of a neoliberal plan in Haiti published by Oxford University professor and economist Paul Collier. The details of the plan, drawn up in January 2009 and outlined in a paper titled “Haiti: From Natural

Catastrophe to Economic Security,” stipulates that powerful international bodies must intervene militarily and occupy failed states to ensure economic reconstruction and development (Smith, 2010/2/8). Specifically, Collier and Clinton advocate for the investment in luxury tourism and the expansion of the garment industry, despite the fact that these projects contribute little to the social fabric of Haitian society and serve exclusively the needs of major businesses. Collier advises for the exploitation of the low labour wages by corporations in Haiti as a viable means to compete with China’s textile industry. Furthermore, Collier proposes extensive privatization of the country’s port and electrical systems (Smith, 2010/2/8). As a result, the plan functions to exacerbate the inequalities already experienced by the Haitian poor and does little to develop the crumbling Haitian infrastructure, which has historically developed around similar endeavors.

The excitement of US officials concerning the financial opportunity in Haiti is best represented by a cable released in February 2010 from the US Ambassador in Haiti, which contains the exclamation, “THE GOLD RUSH IS ON!” referring to potential business opportunities available for the reconstruction of Port-au-Prince (USEP, 2010/2/1; Fresnillo, 2014/3/5). The US government was quick to recognize the financial significance of the natural disaster and used its political influence to impose control over the aid money destined for Haiti. Two institutions were established by the international community to oversee the management of relief and recovery funds: the Interim Haiti Recovery Commission (IHRC), co-chaired by Bill Clinton and the Haitian Prime Minister, and the Haiti Reconstruction Fund (HRF). Almost none of the money donated to Haiti actually went directly into the country or to local businesses. Instead, funds were primarily funneled back into US infrastructure and private US corporations (Quigley & Ramanauskas, 2012/1/3).

The greatest financial beneficiaries of aid money destined for Haiti were in fact the US government and US private corporations. Although the US donated an impressive

\$379 million immediately after the quake, the Associated Press reported in January 2010 that 33 cents of each dollar was reimbursed back to the US military, and 42 cents of every dollar was invested into private and public US NGOs—very little aid was directly invested in the Haitian government (Quigley & Ramanauskas, 2012/1/3). In August 2010, the US Congressional Research Office revealed that the \$1.6 billion donated by the US for relief efforts followed a similar pattern of self-indulgence. For example, some noteworthy recipients include the Department of Defense, which was reimbursed \$655 million; the US Agency for International Development (USAID)—which funneled extensive contracts into US disaster relief, debris removal, and reconstruction corporations—received \$350 million; and, individual US states received grants of \$220 million to cover services for Haitian evacuees (Quigley & Ramanauskas, 2012/1/3). Reconstruction contracts followed a similar trend: of the 1,500 contracts worth over \$267 million, only 20% were allocated to Haitian firms. The rest have been awarded to US firms that rely on US suppliers, yet exploit the low-wages of Haitian workers (Dupuy, 2011/1/7; Flaherty, 2011/1/13). Specifically, \$76 million in contracts were doled out to the Washington, DC area, encompassing nearly 30% of the total allocated funds (Quigley & Ramanauskas, 2012/1/3). Haiti received a meager 1% of emergency aid and 16% of reconstruction aid directly (Fresnillo, 2014/3/5). Relatively speaking, the Haitian government and local businesses were almost entirely bypassed in the reconstruction of their own country, whereas the US received substantial capital investment.

In the immediate aftermath of the earthquake, US food aid was needed to nourish the country in its shocked state; however, in the long-term, food aid has had a disastrous effect on the local agricultural industry. Local peasant farmers are unable to compete with the low prices of surplus US rice, corn, and sugar that were dumped into Haiti in 2010. Local demand for Haitian foods dropped along with prices as American food was being given away (Webster, 2012/1/10). In this manner, foreign food aid creates a

parallel structure that inhibits economic development and undermines local markets. Indeed, food aid can have the deleterious effect of establishing a dependency on agricultural imports and ultimately serves the interests of donors (Cunningham, 2012, pp. 110, 112).

This is not the first time that local agricultural markets in Haiti have been undermined by US food policy. During the Clinton Administration, neoliberal policies and IMF-World Bank sponsored trade reforms lifted trade barriers and opened Haiti to the US agricultural market. This led to the dumping of surplus US food capital into Haiti. Due to the 2008 US Farm Bill, which subsidizes American farmers and agricultural products, the US is able to undersell Haitian peasant farmers. Food aid and food dumping into newly opened markets, enables the US to maintain high prices locally while disposing of surplus capital abroad. Here, the long-term effects of food aid on the recipient country do not discourage the donor as the arrangement actually benefits the US economy and provides the opportunity to pursue strategic welfare and economic policies (Cunningham, 2012, p. 104; Friedmann, 1993, p. 35). Even former President Bill Clinton, who instigated the tariff cut-offs on imported rice in Haiti, recognizes that the policies have “failed everywhere [they’ve] been tried” (Dupuy, 2011/1/7). The end result is a food market perpetually dependent on the foreign supply of foods that can be grown locally.

Conclusion

The behaviour of the US towards Haiti can be described most accurately as imperial. This is evident from well-documented US military and CIA interventions, US masked political influence via MINUSTAH, disguised state manipulation through NGOs, forced occupation following the earthquake, and predatory neoliberal impositions and exploitative capitalism during Haiti’s incapacitated state. It is true that the US presence in Haiti

following the earthquake was not entirely detrimental—it did in fact help to some extent; however, based on the evidence, the primary concern of the US military and government seems to have been an exercise of control and promotion of corporate self-interests, not genuine concern for Haiti's suffering people. Much of the "help" that the US provided, in fact hurt Haiti instead. It is therefore essential to establish that "good intentions," whether truly sincere or honestly sinister, do not negate responsibility for the final result. As such, the US is entirely deserving of criticism for its exploitative relationship with Haiti. During the last several decades, the US has clearly imposed its imperial rule over Haiti through repeated military and CIA interventions that aim to establish US-style democratic systems that favour neoliberalism, thus opening markets for the disposal of surplus US capital. The mission of MINUSTAH appears to be an occupation with the sole purpose of supporting a US-established puppet government system, which in turn, amplifies the security threat in Haiti and undermines national sovereignty. Furthermore, the US strategically uses NGOs to pursue political interests in Haiti and is able to avoid responsibility due to the unaccountability of NGOs: NGOs are typically exempt from critical analysis due to their adoption of a humanitarian morality, protected by the consensus of a right to intervene. The imperial ambitions of the US are epitomized by the militarization of humanitarian aid in Haiti, which offers the most blatant example of usurped national sovereignty through forced occupation. Finally, an overwhelming military presence enabled the imposition of political control and facilitated the ensuing disaster capitalism of privatization, deregulation, decentralization, and corporate profiteering. The US took advantage of the "blank slate" presented in Haiti and pushed forward its old plan of structural reform to increase trade and further open up the Haitian market, subverting Haiti to the position of a US means of production and sponge for capital overflow.

With friends like these, who needs enemies? The US military and its soldiers are not humanitarians, and the US government is no economic or political saviour—rather, they are the embodiment of the “new” imperialism.

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